

Cult Video: a Screenplay

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Abstract

Throughout my time as a video production student, I learned that, perhaps above all other elements, having well-composed, filmable scripts is the most important element of any production. Without the careful consideration of a screenwriter, any video project will more than likely flounder in artistic mediocrity. Being that I have also taken on a minor in screenwriting, I decided that conceptualizing a fully developed, feature-length script would be a rewarding opportunity for learning skills and techniques that would inform my future career as a creative in the film and television industry. Through studying major works of screenwriting and tinkering consistently with my work, I have composed a fully realized script that has the potential to go into production on a professional scale.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Dominic Caristi for advising my project. Though he has long helped me in my college career as an advisor and professor, his help and encouragement in this particular instance is deeply appreciated.

I would also like to thank Professor Kathryn Gardiner and Dr. Matthew Mullens for their continued guidance in the art of screenwriting.

Finally, I would like to thank Lauren, Kate, John, Elise, Kyle, Angelo, Madyson, Tyler, Logan, Kaylee, and Eli for their continued encouragement throughout this project.

Process Analysis Statement

The greatest challenge for any writer is the everlasting hunt for inspiration. However, I was fortunate with this story to have found inspiration in my previous work. In a creative writing class from two semesters ago, I created a brief sketch of a story about two men running a failing video store. I saw a lot of potential in these characters; there was a real sadness to these two sad sacks running a business in an industry that, while populated by men and women like our main characters who have a deep passion for what they do, is ultimately doomed to fail.

I began the creative process by outlining the story. This is an incredibly important step in my writing. With a more realistic, less plot driven story like this, it is most important to know exactly what your story beats are and when you must hit them. I spent much of my time in this part of the process reading seminal works in screenwriting theory, using them as guidance on my journey through crafting a full-length script.

Once I knew exactly how the story was going to play out, it was time to actually write the script. I researched cult fandoms to find out exactly what made these diehards tick. I improvised pieces of dialogue to myself out loud in order to find the most realistic sounding passages possible. I ask my screenwriting friends and former teachers of the craft about the state of the script, and what they thought I should do next. Working on this script with the wide support network I had was one of the more creatively fulfilling chapters of my life.

When it came time to edit, I came down as hard as possible. There were several scenes and characters that needed to be completely scrapped due to them no longer fitting my vision. In particular, I took away a girlfriend character from the younger of my leads at the beginning of the script to make his situation a touch more pathetic. I also sanded the edges of the father character, as many people I talked to throughout the process thought that he was perhaps a little too cruel. With several notes on plot, characters, dialogue, format, and general grammar errors, I hacked away at the script for several weeks before forging it into the document it is today.

Creating this script as my capstone was one of the greatest achievements of my entire college career. It allowed me to spread my wings creatively, and create a script that would be able to be produced in the field of my choice. I'm immensely proud of the script, and the process that brought me here today taught me lessons I won't soon forget.

A brief note: due to the fact that I did not write my screenplay in Microsoft Word (it is nearly impossible and requires impossible to maintain formatting), these pages are not in numerical order.

Works Cited

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Cult Video

by

Brandon Kratkoczki

FADE IN:

EXT. BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO - DAY

The video on screen is formatted in 4:3, as if an being played on an old TV. There is a fuzzy VHS sheen to this scene, as if this tape has been played a million times.

We see Brian's Cult Video. On either side of its storefront is another business. The store is located in a small town's town square. An ANNOUNCER begins to speak.

Cheesy 80's synth music blares.

ANNOUNCER

You heard it here folks, Brian's
Cult Video has just had its grand
opening in beautiful downtown
Crown Point!

CANNED APPLAUSE plays. A man in his mid- 30's, YOUNG BRIAN, exits the store. He's dressed in the highest of 90's fashion (that is to say, a colorful mess of a buttoned shirt and white pants).

The camera SNAP ZOOMS suddenly, making Young Brian much closer in the frame.

YOUNG BRIAN

Hi, I'm Brian Vernan, and this is
Brian's Cult Video. Come on and
step inside!

He signals towards the camera and walks inside the store, shutting the door behind him.

INT. BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO - DAY

The store is small, but is packed with movies. Wooden shelves stuffed to the brim with VHS tapes cascade to the ceiling. There are several rows of plaster shelves that contain even more tapes.

There's a small room in the back with a small TV and even more movies.

Shots of customers flipping through the VHS shelves play as Young Brian narrates.

YOUNG BRIAN (V.O.)
I've loved the weird, the obscure,
and the bizarre my entire life,
and I want to bring that passion
to every single one of you!

I have the largest VHS collection in all of Northwest
Indiana, so you're bound to find something you fall head
over heels in love with.

Young Brian walks into frame of a wide shot overlooking the
entire store.

YOUNG BRIAN
Any fan of non-mainstream movies
will be able to find something
that they love. I've got all of
your favorite directors here!
Directors like...

CUT TO:

An excited, incredibly 90's looking kid staring the camera
directly down the barrel of the camera. The transition to
this shot was handled by a ridiculous wipe of some sorts.

KID #1
Ed Wood!

CUT TO:

Another 80's kid staring the camera down, stumbling over
their words.

KID #2
John Cass- cassa-

YOUNG BRIAN (O.S.)
Cas-a-vett-es.

KID #2
Casavezzis.

CUT TO:

A third child, who's deeply enthusiastic about something
they don't know the first thing about.

KID #3
John Waters!

CUT TO:

Brian, standing at the front of the store, with several extras behind him pretending to shop and be interested in the VHS tapes.

YOUNG BRIAN

So come on down to Brian's Cult
Video on main street, right across
from the roller skating rink!
We'll see you later, freakazoids!

EXT. BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO - DAY

A wide shot of the entire store with several people walking all around it. A SUPER flies into frame.

SUPER - BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO, FIND YOUR
NEW CULT CLASSIC TODAY!

The SUPER FADES, leaving the shot
of the store and pedestrians.

A CROSS DISSOLVE removes the huge crowd of people, as well as the VHS filter.

The 4:3 aspect ratio expands to full widescreen.

INT. BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO - DAY

The once overfilled shelves are seemingly more empty, instead being covered by a decent amount of DVDs with a few VHS tapes thrown in.

The nice shelves have been replaced with cheap wire shelves.

The back room is now reserved for avant-garde and very out there films.

A red curtain over one the shelves holds a sign that reads "ADULT FILMS - IF YOU CAN CONVINCE ME YOU'RE 18+, YOU'VE GOT IT."

A TV in the corner plays an obscure, black and white film that no one's ever heard of.

DAVE, a man in his mid-20s with neat, combed hair and thick black glasses sits behind the counter at the back of the front room. Behind this register is a plain wooden door that reads "BRIAN'S OFFICE."

He opens up the cash register.

It's completely empty, save his nametag.

He puts it on the breast of his shirt, then slams the cash register shut.

He checks his watch.

11:59 AM changes to 12:00 PM.

The rusted out bells attached to the shop's door let out a feeble ring.

In walks BRIAN, mid-60's, and still dressing in a similar manner as the old commercials. He walks with a clunky, carved cane.

BRIAN
Mornin'.

DAVE
Afternoon, more like.

Brian begins to make his way to the back section of the store.

BRIAN
Yeah yeah, good to see you too, smart-ass.

DAVE
Please remind me why we open the store at god damned noon every day, will ya?

BRIAN
I don't want the business of anyone who wakes up before 10 AM by choice.

Brian arrives in the back room and peers at the TV screen with a confused look.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
What is this?

Dave grabs a DVD from the counter and walks to the back room.

DAVE
It's something called Attack of the Giant Leeches. I found it at some garage sale the other day, and it sounded like the sort of thing that would belong here. Why don't you watch a bit of it and let me know what you think?

BRIAN
(sarcastically)
But Dave, what about all of the
customers? Shouldn't we be on the
lookout to attend to their needs?

DAVE
I'm sure our customers will get
along just fine.

Brian grabs a chair set in the corner of the room and
places it in front of the TV.

INT. BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO - LATER

Dave is sitting on his cellphone, studiously typing away.
He's writing a Reddit post.

Suddenly, a LAUGH from Brian is heard from the back room.

BRIAN
Oh my God, Dave, you've gotta see
this shit, this movie is
absolutely unreal!

Dave walks from behind the counter and goes into the back.

Dave stands behind Brian's chair.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
Check this out.

Brian rewinds the DVD with the remote, then presses play at
the appropriate scene.

In the movie, two hilarious, fake-looking, rubber suit
monsters emerge from the water and chase down the screaming
teenagers on screen.

Brian and Dave begin to crack up.

DAVE
That sure is somethin'.

BRIAN
Somethin'? It's gold. You and I
could've made this in my basement.

Dave chuckles and pats Brian on the shoulder.

DAVE
You don't have a basement anymore.

BRIAN

Yeah, but if I still did, you and I would be able to do it. What do you think, does this one deserve to be shelved?

DAVE

I think so.

Dave grabs the DVD case from Brian and brings it to the front of the room. He shelves it in a section labelled "B=HORROR."

INT. BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO - LATER

Dave stands behind the counter and Brian stands cross-armed in front of the counter as the two debate.

BRIAN

So you don't think The Room is great?

DAVE

I never said that and never will. What I did say is that it's harder to like when you know how much of a fascist Tommy was behind the scenes. I mean, he was screaming at people, manipulating his friends, made people do scenes over and over again...

BRIAN

Which led to the funniest movie of all time.

DAVE

So Tommy put all of these poor, ordinary people through hell just so every weirdo college freshman could show that to his new friends to try to show them how wacky and quirky he is?

BRIAN

Oh come on, don't give me that. People love The Room. So what if Tommy pissed some people off while he made it? You know who else pissed people off while he was making things? Kubrick. He forged the goddamned Shining out of the sheer force of screaming at Shelley Duvall.

DAVE

Come the hell on dude, that's The Shining. You and I agree that that's one of the greatest movies ever made. Tommy didn't even have the decency to make a good movie out of what he did to his cast and crew.

BRIAN

I enjoy The Room just as much as I enjoy The Shining.

DAVE

But for all the wrong reasons.

BRIAN

But I still genuinely enjoy it whenever I put it on, and so do you.

DAVE

I don't disagree. I just think maybe the Cult of Wiseau is just a little bit toxic.

The doorbell to the shop rings.

In comes STELLA, a high school aged punk with a denim jacket, a Misfits shirt, and edgy haircut.

STELLA

What's up, guys?

BRIAN

Hey howdy Stella.

DAVE

You actually just came in at the perfect time.

STELLA

Oh yeah? What's up?

DAVE

Well, I just finished reading The Disaster Artist, and I really can't get over the fact that Tommy was a gigantic asshole on that set, but Brian's telling me I should just get over it and enjoy The Room. What's your take?

Stella makes her way to the counter and stands next to Brian.

STELLA

Well, on one hand, I want all abusive asshole men to never be able to walk the Earth again.

DAVE

Ha.

STELLA

But on the other hand, The Room fucking rules, so I'll call it a draw for now.

BRIAN

Ha.

Stella goes to the shelf against the wall and scans her eyes across the rows of DVDs.

STELLA

You guys got anything new since I was in here last?

Brian joins her at the shelf.

BRIAN

All sorts of stuff, man. How do you feel about giant leeches?

STELLA

Ehh, maybe a little passé for where I am in life right now.

BRIAN

Of course, we've all gone through times when giant rubber leech men emerging from the lake to grab terrified townspeople hasn't been enough.

Brian grabs a DVD from the top shelf.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

How do you feel about blood orgies?

STELLA

Interested to say the least. Gimme the elevator pitch.

BRIAN

The movie's called Blood Orgy of the She-Devils.

STELLA

Isn't that what Trump called the women's march?

BRIAN

Probably. It's about a bunch of young people who get captured by a weird, witchy cult.

STELLA

Is there any blood?

BRIAN

Barely.

STELLA

Are there any orgies?

BRIAN

Nope.

STELLA

Are there even any she-devils?

BRIAN

Maybe? The movie doesn't really have an answer for you either.

STELLA

I'm sold.

Brian gives the DVD to Stella.

Stella walks up to the counter and confidently places the DVD in front of Dave.

STELLA (CONT'D)

One blood orgy, please.

DAVE (SARCASTICALLY)

Is this the manners we're treating our youth today?

Stella rolls her eyes.

STELLA

Yeah it is, Nancy Reagan. One blood orgy, please.

DAVE

Coming right up.

Dave scans the barcode taped to the back of the box and sets the DVD beside him.

He looks at the register.

DAVE (CONT'D)
How many days do you want this
worthless piece of garbage movie?

STELLA
3, I guess.

DAVE
2 bucks.

Stella reaches into her jacket's breast pocket and pulls out two crumpled bills.

She places them on the counter.

Dave scoops them up and puts them into the empty cash register.

He passes the DVD back to Stella.

DAVE (CONT'D)
It's due back on the 5th, does
that work for ya?

STELLA
Yeah, I can count, you sexist.

DAVE
You caught me. Have a nice day
cleaning a sandwich or whatever
you women-types do.

Stella chuckles and makes her way to the store's front door. She turns back to the guys.

STELLA
Brian said you guys'll be at
Mondo-Con again this year?

Brian makes his way back near the register across from Dave again.

BRIAN
Yep, same ole booth. We're hoping
to finally sell off the doubles
that we've accumulated through the
years, and maybe some rare stuff
that nerds will pay for.

STELLA

Sweet. I'll try to stop by. I won't buy anything, but I might steal something and say I got a really good deal for it at booth 306.

BRIAN

406. If you're gonna rob somebody, rob the people you know won't call the cops on ya. Who knows how 36D would treat ya.

DAVE

I would just like to note that stealing from a failing business is cruel, friend of the store or not.

Brian tossles Dave's hair.

BRIAN

Oh sweet, naive David. Just think of it as an... uh...

STELLA

Artistic loan.

BRIAN

Exactly! We're spreading culture, my dear co-pilot. Without us, this town's a wasteland. Everyone's favorite movie would be The Notebook. Everyone's favorite band suddenly becomes Florida Georgia Fucking Line. It's our sacred duty as men of this Earth to spread the holy word of terrible, awkward, hilarious movies made by perverted Japanese men to keep this town from completely blowing sack.

Dave chuckles.

DAVE

If I weren't a narcissist who loved hearing how culturally important I am, I'd call you a kook.

BRIAN

Was it the sacred mission line?

DAVE

I suppose so. Have a great day,
Stella.

STELLA

Keep on rockin' in the free world.

Stella exits the store as the two men wave her goodbye.

EXT. BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO - NIGHT

Dave and Brian leave the store. Brian pulls out a keyring
with a metric ton of keys on it.

He somehow knows exactly what key to use and locks the
store behind him.

BRIAN

Well, see ya tomorrow pal.

DAVE

Yep. Have a good night.

BRIAN

You too now, buddy.

Dave walks away.

Dave looks across the street from the show.

A sign reading "MODERN GLUBS BUBBLE TEA BOUTIQUE" blares
with bright light across the street.

There's a line out the door.

Every single customer looks like they belong in a Wes
Anderson movie.

Several people are drinking out of hilariously over-sized
tea cups.

Brian scoffs.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Fuckin' hipsters.

He walks away, hands in pocket.

INT. DAVE'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Dave's parents have a house that includes the finest in
midwest decoration: bowling plates, bizarre quilts, what
have you.

EUGENE and CLAUDIA, both in their late 50's to early 60's, sit parallel of each other on different rocking chairs, both well-worn. There is a full couch between the two.

We hear Dave fumbles with the lock to the house before entering.

Eugene and Claudia don't look up from the TV, which is playing a rerun of some old-school gameshow.

DAVE

Hey mom. Dad.

Dave sets his keys down on a small table by the door.

He walks to the living room.

He sits on the middle couch.

CLAUDIA

How was work today, dear?

DAVE

Aaahhh, the usual.

An awkward silence.

EUGENE

Did you ask Brian about that raise you and I discussed?

Dave rolls his eyes.

DAVE

I haven't yet. The store doesn't have the money to give me a raise, you know that.

EUGENE

I do.

A brief pause.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

Ya know, Mr. Carr's Hardware is still looking for a manager, and I can pass him a resume at breakfast if you wanted me to.

Dave stands up and turns to his dad.

DAVE

How many times do I have to tell you guys that I'm completely happy where I am? Is it going to up itself to twice a day now? Just let me know so I can pencil you guys in.

CLAUDIA

All me and your father are saying is that we think you can do better than this somewhere else. How much longer can this place stay open? You're going to need a new job eventually when the store folds.

DAVE

It hasn't folded, so I'm not looking.

EUGENE

But what happens when it does, huh? What happens when that skeevy old pervert closes his doors for good? Where does that leave you?

DAVE

I don't know, Dad. And I can't find the energy to care, either.

Dave walks away towards a door behind the living room.

He opens it up.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Goodnight.

He slams the basement door.

INT. DAVE'S BASEMENT - RIGHT AFTER

Dave's basement is a charming mess. Comics clutter the floor, band posters fill the walls. A large DVD shelf and flatscreen TV make up the centerpiece of the room.

In front of that TV display is a large, ratted couch with cotton coming out of its holes.

A full-sized mattress without a bedframe is placed against the far wall.

Above this mattress is a ledge containing a record player and a small box of records.

Dave stomps downstairs like a frustrated toddler.

He throws himself into his bed.

He lets out a frustrated moan into his pillow.

He scrolls through his record crate briefly.

He pulls out a brightly-colored LP.

He takes the record out of the case and puts it on the record player.

He drops the needle.

Loud, aggressive punk starts playing, a la Black Flag.

He lays in bed in a relaxed pose, bobbing his head steadily to the music.

INT. DAVE'S HOUSE - THE SAME TIME

Eugene and Claudia can hear the muffled punk rock music from the basement.

Eugene sighs.

INT. BRIAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Brian's apartment is reminiscent of John Cusack's from High Fidelity. Shelves upon shelves of movies line every single walking space of the apartment.

There are carved out spaces in these shelves for a widescreen TV and a nice stereo soundsystem.

By the window is a record player setup.

Brian enters the apartment. He hangs his keys on a keyhook by the door.

A small mutt BARKS as he enters.

BRIAN

Hey there, Nilbog.

He leans down to pet Nilbog.

CUT TO:

Him sitting on his sofa facing the TV. A cigar is lit, and a glass of scotch is poured. A weirdo cult movie from the 80s plays on the screen.

Brian laughs at something ridiculous.

He sets his glass down on the coffetable in front of the couch.

The table is covered in sheets of paper. A lot of them are clearly overdue bills.

CUT TO:

Brian asleep on the couch with Nilbog curled up beside him. The movie's still running.

INT. BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO - DAY

Brian and Dave organize shelves. Brian pulls a DVD that catches his eye from the shelf.

BRIAN
Have you ever seen Hollywood
Chainsaw Hookers?

Dave looks at him with confusion.

DAVE
Of course not, I'm not a weird sex
pervert.

BRIAN
Oh come on, that's not fair to
this thing. It's a lot more
interesting than it sounds.

DAVE
Try me.

Brian makes his way to the back of the room towards the TV where they run movies.

BRIAN
It's all about this group of
prostitutes based in..,

He gestures towards Dave to finish his sentence.

DAVE
Hollywood.

BRIAN

Good work. It's about these women who capture their johns and murder them with chainsaws.

Dave walks to Brian in the back room and gives an unimpressed look.

DAVE

I could've guessed that from the title.

BRIAN

No no no, you're missing out on the best part. These prostitutes are killing their johns because they're a part of a chainsaw worshipping cult that requires sacrifices to keep the spirit of the mystic chainsaw alive.

Dave looks at him impressed.

DAVE

I'm not gonna pretend you didn't already have me at hookers, but chainsaw death cult just seals the deal. Throw that shit on.

Brian pats Dave on the shoulder.

BRIAN

That's what I thought.

He puts the DVD in and presses the play button. Suddenly, the door opens, and the rusted doorbell rings.

Dave and Brian don't look up from the TV.

DAVE

Wow, Stella, I'm honestly impressed you brought something in on time for once. We'll have to mock up a plaque or something..

A different voice is heard.

VINCE

W-who's Stella?

Dave and Brian look up in amazement to see VINCE, early 40's.

They look at each other, then look back at Vince. They strut across the store to him.

BRIAN
Hello good sir, and welcome to
Brian's Cult Video, home of the
weird, the wacky, and the bizarre.
Is there anything that I could
help ya find?

Vince pulls out his phone.

VINCE
Yeah, actually, my wife was
lookin' for a movie and sent me
out to pick it up. Do y'all
have... uhh...

He checks his phone screen one last time.

VINCE (CONT'D)
Transformers: Dark of the Moon?

Dave and Brian give the man quizzical looks.

BRIAN
Excuse me?

VINCE
Yeah, the new Transformers movie.
I stopped at all the Redboxes
around town and none of them had
it. I was wondering if you guys
had it in stock.

Brian is obviously fuming. Dave steps between the two
parties to try and figure something out.

DAVE
Well sir, we don't actually carry
that, we're more of a hipster-

Brian snaps.

BRIAN
Don't you ever use that word in
this establishment ever again.

DAVE
We're more of an underground
store. I'm sure we could find
something somewhere that would
satisfy your needs.

VINCE
Well, thank ya very much sir, what
have ya got?

Dave begins to guide him towards the back of the store.
Brian stares them down with his arms crossed.

DAVE

Well, we've got a few movies from recent years that sort of have that giant robot explosion vibe Bay's going for. I don't know if you've ever heard of Pacific Rim, but...

Brian snaps.

BRIAN

Just get the fuck outta my store, okay?

Vince turns to him confused.

VINCE

I'm sorry, what?

Dave turns to Brian with a look that could kill.

DAVE

I'm sure it was nothing, wasn't it Brian?

BRIAN

No, it certainly was something. Get out of my store, normcore scum.

Dave hits his hand on his head and mutters to himself.

DAVE

You son of a bitch...

Vince makes his way to the front of the store to confront Brian.

VINCE

And what exactly gives you the right to boot me out of your store for no reason?

BRIAN

You don't have taste.

VINCE

So you're gonna kick a customer out because he doesn't want to check out any of your weird fetish movies, but instead has the audacity to check out something everybody in the world likes that his wife wanted to see?

BRIAN

Yes I am. Please get out.

Vince storms through the door. He turns to the inside of the store.

VINCE

This is why places like this aren't around anymore. Because of assholes like you two.

DAVE

Hey man, I know he's a dick, but don't lump me in with him. I still think you should watch Pacific Rim, you'd like it.

VINCE

Thanks, I'll be sure to pick it up from the Redbox.

He slams the door behind him.

Dave storms to the front of the store.

DAVE

Dude, what the hell?

BRIAN

Oh come on, do you want a Transformers fan shopping here? Can your conscience bear the fact that you almost gave a Michael Bay fan something quality to watch today?

DAVE

Yes it could! You know why? Because my conscience likes money! My conscience likes being employed!

BRIAN

It was one guy, there'll be more.

DAVE

Ya know what one guy's gonna do?
One guy's gonna tell a hundred
guys how much we suck. And then a
hundred people are gonna tell a
hundred people how much we suck.
And no one will ever come here
again because we'll be known as
the weird porno video store that
sucks so bad!

BRIAN

Let him tell all his normie
friends. He's not going to be
telling anyone of value not to
come here.

DAVE

You're really going to make a
nerds versus jocks thing out of
this?

BRIAN

Yes I am.

DAVE

You are so unreasonable.

Dave walks away towards the counter.

Brian follows him.

BRIAN

Well, I'm sorry that I want to
keep the cult in cult video store
alive. Shoot me for wanting to
keep this space a celebration of
the underground. I'm sorry for
wanting this to stay a place for
nerds who want to blow off their
parents or significant others to
come stare at DVDs for a few
hours.

DAVE

Nerds are the new cool kids,
Brian. Look at what's topping the
box office. Superheroes are in.
Movies about toys are in. Star
Wars is in.

BRIAN

Those aren't real nerds.

Dave looks at Brian with a stunned expression.

DAVE

And just what do you mean by that? Iron Man is one of the most popular characters in the world now and you read his issues every month.

BRIAN

Exactly, I READ them. Do you think any of these kids spending a hundred bucks on pre-order tickets for the Avengers have ever held a comic book? Have any of them ever been to a con? Have any of them ever experienced a fandom so intense that it takes over their life, and suddenly their bedrooms become these unholy shrines to these characters that old men created decades ago? No one in the mainstream has ever been a nerd. These are just kids who buy what Disney tells them to buy. There's absolutely nothing less counter-culture than the Walt Disney company.

Dave sits back, stunned.

DAVE

All I'm saying is that you could afford to be a little more open-minded about who you let into the store.

Brian shuffles behind the counter and opens the back door. He peeks out at Dave.

BRIAN

Never.

He shuts the door behind him.

EXT. BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO - DAY

Brian has a truck pulled up at the storefront. There are several boxes in the truck's bed.

Dave exits the store with one last box.

DAVE

Alright man, this should be everything for now.

BRIAN
Is that the Star Wars Holiday
Special box?

DAVE
You know it.

BRIAN
Then we're good to go.

Dave walks to the back of the truck and places the box
down. He walks back over to Brian.

DAVE
How many of them do you think
we'll sell this year?

BRIAN
How about we make a wager outta
this?

DAVE
What are the stakes?

BRIAN
Well, I bet we sell 10. Loser has
to watch the Star Wars Holiday
Special, of course.

The two shake hands.

DAVE
You've got yourself a deal.

INT./EXT. BRIAN'S TRUCK - DAY

Brian's truck is a mess. Wrappers cascade across the back
of the truck, paper lay across the dashboard. The car looks
like it smells like cigarettes.

DAVE
I didn't know you hand-burned
these every year on your own
computer, that's an insane amount
of time. My mom used to burn all
of my plays to DVD in high school,
and it'd take her hours.

BRIAN
What can I say, I'm a man of the
people.

DAVE

And you ripped the video from a cassette you actually had back in the 70s, yeah?

BRIAN

Yeah man. I wanted everything Star Wars after the first movie came out. I VCR'd commercial breaks during Adventures in Rainbow Country just in case there was an ad for a Star Wars toy. Then I'd show my mom the exact commercial around Christmastime so she'd know exactly what to get me.

Dave laughs.

DAVE

That's cute man, I gotta be honest.

BRIAN

You don't need to flatter me kid, I've already given you a job at this point, what else do you expect from me?

DAVE

Oh, I dunno, my checks on time? Do you think you could swing that?

BRIAN

Absolutely not. We're here.

They pull into the parking lot of a large convention center.

They receive a parking pass from a man in a neon jacket.

They are guided by a man with orange runway cones. They pull into a parking spot.

They remove a pallet from the back of the truck.

They wheel the now stuffed with boxes pallet towards the convention center.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - DAY

The convention center seems to go on forever. There is booth after booth covered in comic memorabilia, action figures, and minor, failing celebrities.

Dave and Brian get their hands stamped by a COSTUMED MAN in a Captain America costume.

BRIAN
Thanks Superman.

Dave laughs.

DAVE
Please ignore my asshole friend here. Have a great day, Mr. Rogers.

COSTUMED MAN
Citizens.

The Costumed Man gives them a salute.

Brian blows a raspberry.

INT. CONVENTION HALL TABLE - LATER

Brian and Dave roll up to their table, which is in the boondocks of the convention center.

A cheaply produced plastic sign reading "BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO - TABLE 408" rests on the cheap wooden table.

Dave and Brian set their boxes on top of the table crudely.

DAVE
So what's the organization this year? By color? Genre? Title? Year? Director? Country of origin?

BRIAN
How about the old standby "However the fuck?"

DAVE
A man who respects the classics, I like that.

They proceed to crudely dump their DVDs and VHS's onto the table, stacking them in lazy piles.

Each spine of the movies has a cheap white sticker written on in Sharpie.

"\$3.99."

"\$22.50 - RARE!"

"\$.05 - PLEASE TAKE OFF OUR HANDS."

As they continue to unload, they notice an old man, REGGIE, next to them.

His booth is adorned with action figures still in their boxes, comic books, POP figures, and no taste.

Brian looks to the other side of their table.

An empty table that reads "Eduardo's Rare Cinema."

BRIAN

Looks like Eduardo couldn't make it out this year. Wonder why.

DAVE

His store closed. You didn't see that?

Brian puffs air out of his nose.

BRIAN

No I did not. Hell of a place, hell of a guy. He showed us all sorts of cool stuff. He was the one that showed us that hilarious police training video. It's a shame.

DAVE

Yeah, man.

BRIAN

I wish we had known, I woulda popped by his liquidation sale and gone picking.

Dave looks annoyed.

DAVE

Really? Our friend loses his store, and you go straight to fantasies of picking him dry?

BRIAN

Look, you and I both know this industry's going down faster than the Hindenberg. Anything that could've made us stand out is another 10 bucks in our register, which, I might remind you, is empty.

Reggie turns to the two of them.

REGGIE

He's got a point, ya know.

Dave and Brian turn to Reggie with a confused look.

BRIAN

And just who are you, buster?

Reggie gently laughs.

REGGIE

Glad people in the collectables industry still got some vinegar in them. Name's Reggie. Run a comics and collectables shop out in Valpo. Sorry to hear about your friend's store. But I do get where uhh...

BRIAN

Brian.

REGGIE

Brian's coming from. It's a cruel business us collectors are in.

BRIAN

We're not collectors. We're a video store serving our community of nerds, freaks, geeks, and spazzes.

REGGIE

Nice canned line. And like hell you're not a collector.

BRIAN

Suppose I am. What do I do if I don't have any money in the register?

REGGIE

You've gotta adapt.

Brian scoffs.

BRIAN

And just what do you mean by that?

Reggie gestures towards his collection.

REGGIE

Look at what I've got here. Sure, I've got all the stuff I like.

(MORE)

REGGIE (CONT'D)

I've got misconstructured Picard figures and ultra rare Spiderman comics with holographic covers, but I've also got these cheapo POP things. You ever hear of these? Strangest things. They just sit there.

BRIAN

And what fun is something you don't play with? I would string up somebody if I found out they were just using our videos on their shelves.

DAVE

I hate to say it, but the old man on my side of the table's got a point. I don't want any collecting fetishist to just walk into our store for the sole purpose of putting something behind glass. I think a lot of nerd culture is the interactivity of it all. That's why we still have cons. That's why we still have message boards.

BRIAN

I hate message boards though. Buncha dorks sitting behind their screens instead of being out in the real world letting their freak flag fly. Come out of the closet, ya chumps.

Dave scoffs.

DAVE

That is both wildly insensitive to gay people and exclusionary to online geek cultures.

Reggie laughs.

He goes over to one of his shelves and picks out a POP figure from the top.

REGGIE

As much as I might agree with you fellas, we've just gotta learn to adapt in our industry. Look at this guy. Green Goblin Comic-con 2013 exclusive POP figure.

(MORE)

REGGIE (CONT'D)

This baby's going off my shelf for 90 bucks later today, I'll bet. And all because I learned to give the kids what they want.

BRIAN

You don't ever feel bad about that? That you're catering to fake geeks and posers by selling these terribly produced, dead-eyed teddy bears?

REGGIE

My store's open, isn't it? How much of a windfall would it be for you guys if 90 bucks fell into your cash register after one transaction?

Brian and Dave sit in silence.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

That's what I thought. Hope you guys have a good con.

Reggie quietly goes back to work in his booth.

SUDDENLY, A GLASSES BOY WALKS UP TO BRIAN'S BOOTH.

The two turn to him.

He looks through a pile and grabs a DVD.

GLASSES BOY

Hey, uh, how much for this bootleg of the Holiday Special?

Dave sighs and looks towards Brian.

DAVE

A nickel.

INT./EXT. BRIAN'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Brian drives.

The trunk of the car has fewer boxes than before, but still quite a few.

The two sit in silence as 80's music plays over the car speakers.

Dave takes a deep breath.

BRIAN
I saw these guys live back in the day, ya know.

DAVE
Yeah, how were they?

BRIAN
They killed it. They were opening for Adam Ant and they were even better than he was. I thought that ticket was way too expensive at the time, but I went anyways.

DAVE
How much was the ticket?

BRIAN
9 bucks.

Dave laughs.

DAVE
Just don't mention how much I paid to see Kanye and we'll be good.

They laugh. A few beats of silence.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Hey, so I was thinking about the guy we were talking to earlier.

BRIAN
The guy who tried to bargain with me for the Female Trouble DVD? That son of a bitch knows as well as I do that that specific run of that film is way out of print, and the new Criterion pressing is only going to make it more valuable. He's lucky I didn't call the cops on him.

DAVE
No, man, I'm talking about Reggie.

Brian scoffs.

BRIAN
Christ, that thief?

DAVE
Exactly what do you mean by that?

BRIAN

He's a sellout. You saw the crap he had in stock. Those stupid POP figures, the cans of soda for some stupid video game, I wouldn't be all too surprised if he had bags of Star Wars branded-lettuce under the table.

DAVE

But you saw how busy he was all day? He ended up selling that 90 dollar figure for more than it was worth because two guys started arguing over it. All I'll say is that maybe it'd do us some good if we expanded a bit and, I don't know, try to actively appeal to the people around us?

Brian laughs sarcastically.

BRIAN

Oh come on, you want to start having normies in the store?

DAVE

Normies is the worst non-race related slur of all time.

BRIAN

Okay, fine, do you want normal fucking people in the store?

DAVE

Yes, because normal people love to spend money!

BRIAN

Anything that makes money isn't underground anymore. Comic books lost the right to call themselves nerdy when Avengers became one of the highest grossing movies of all time.

DAVE

But maybe we could get some of that Avengers money if we started carrying a few dumb action figures. Do you want to end up like Eduardo? He's got his kids at home, and who knows who'll hire some one with his skill set.

(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)

Do you want to put yourself in that spot?

BRIAN

I get my family's estate money every month and that's enough to feed me and keep the store going. I've got everything I need. I'd rather end up like Eduardo than sell out.

Dave throws his hands in the air.

DAVE

You are the worst, you know that? You're just the absolute worst person to run a business. If it weren't for your dead mommy's checks, you would've been on the streets years ago. But no, you're one of the lucky ones. You get to sit in a box every day surrounded by your favorite collectables-

BRIAN

They're not fucking collectables.

DAVE

Surrounded by your favorite collectables and not having to worry about ever paying me on time. I quit.

Brian responds coolly.

BRIAN

No ya don't.

DAVE

What if I mean it this time?

BRIAN

You don't mean it. You need me. You have since you got kicked out of school. You have since you moved to your parents' basement. You've needed me since your mom's overdose. When no one else was willing, I was there to give you a job. And what a job, ya know? Ya get to sit around all day with the smartest guy in town and talk movies.

(MORE)

BRIAN (CONT'D)

You don't even have to deal with shit customers because there aren't any. Just the handful of people you and I can count on. Do you know how fucking miserable you'd be in an office job, assuming you'd even be able to land one with your background? I do, because I did that for years and years. I wanted to throw myself out a window every day. The only reason I didn't is because us peons were on the second floor. I brought you onto this job in the first place because you knew who Ed Wood was, and none of the other applicants had even heard of Plan Nine. I brought you on because you are who you are, and no other place in town could come anywhere close to that. This store is the only thing I've got, and it's close to the only thing you've got too. So start acting like it. I love you, man, but sometimes I just want to slap you so hard you see the equator.

The two sit in silence.

Dave speaks up after a few beats.

DAVE

I won the bet, by the way.

Brian turns to him in confusion.

BRIAN

What?

DAVE

We sold 7 copies of the Holiday Special, just under the 10 you needed to win the bet. You've gotta watch it now.

BRIAN

Heh, you act like I don't already watch it every single Christmas.

DAVE

That doesn't make it good.

BRIAN

Hey man, Life Day is the most important celebration across the galaxy. It brings weird pervert Wookies and coked out Carrie Fischer together in harmony.

DAVE

Shit, I forgot about the pervery Wookie scene. Do Wookies even have penises?

BRIAN

And that is precisely where this conversation ends, guy.

INT. BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO - NIGHT

The two come into the store pulling the boxes on the pallet.

Dave starts to take them off and cutting them back open.

Brian goes behind the counter and opens the cash register.

He places the crinkled bills from his pocket (about 90 dollars in loose singles and fives) into the cash register without caring to separate them.

He walks over to his office door.

Dave looks up.

DAVE

Do you, uh, need anything.

Brian doesn't even turn to him.

BRIAN

Nope.

He opens the office door and quickly shuts it behind him.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Feed my dog for me, please.

Dave looks at the door, sadly.

DAVE

Sure thing, old man.

Dave is at the front door about to shut it behind him. He looks back at Brian's office.

He sighs.

Dave walks towards the door.

He opens the door to enter...

BRIAN'S OFFICE.

His office is a mess. Strewn with papers, posters, and receipts. His computer is a cheap, square computer from the 90's.

Brian is passed out on his desk, SNORING.

A bottle of bourbon, half empty, sits next to him.

Dave sighs.

DAVE

Alright, let's set ya up.

Dave reaches under Brian's desk.

He pulls out a blanket.

He drapes it over Brian.

He puts the cap back on the bottle of bourbon.

He wipes up a bourbon stain with a napkin.

He walks back to the door.

He gives one last look at Brian sitting at his desk.

He turns out the light and walks out the door.

We hear a final SNORE.

INT. DAVE'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Dave is laying in his bed with a pair of headphones attached to his record player.

He's deep in thought.

INT. BRIAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Brian's apartment sits empty, save for one lamp. We hear Nilbog the dog BARK.

INT. BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO - DAY

The store is at its usual standstill. Dave is behind the counter.

Stella and Brian are in the back room, watching a movie on the TV.

BRIAN

This is one of the craziest things you'll ever see. I can't believe Criterion put it out.

STELLA

Doesn't Criterion usually put out, like, respectable movies from old Swedish dudes?

BRIAN

99 percent of the time, yeah. And all respect to old Swedish dudes, but this is the shit I live for. These weird freakin' oddities that probably only existed in some guy's basement for years, and then it gets slapped on Blu-Ray by one of the most prestigious companies in the world of film. You've seen House, right Dave? I think we watched it together when it first came out.

DAVE (O.S.)

Stella, remind me how this counts for volunteer hours, please.

Stella laughs.

STELLA

Brian's not paying me.

DAVE (O.S.)

He's hardly paying me either.

STELLA

I'm sure Brian would sign off on your Student Honors Council hours if you needed them, wouldn't ya?

BRIAN

I don't know, he'd have to show initiative, perseverance, and the curiosity of a true honors scholar.

Dave enters the room. He's carrying a pile of VHS tapes.

DAVE

Well, would our bold young scholar
mind shelving these.

Stella and Brian start booing Dave.

BRIAN

Boo!

STELLA

Boo Dave boo!

BRIAN

Go home, you square!

Stella gets up and walks over to Dave. She takes the stack
of movies from his hand.

STELLA

Alright, Alright, I'll submit to
the reign of our glorious leader.

DAVE

Piss off.

Stella walks into the main room and starts placing the
movies on the shelves.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Blood Orgy of the She-Devils is a
week late, by the way.

STELLA

I know. Sorry, I keep forgetting
every time I come here. How much
do I owe ya in late fees?

DAVE

It'd be a lot if Brian believed in
late fees.

BRIAN

Anyone who doesn't turn in movies
on time is a rebel, and I can
respect that quite a bit. Just get
it back to us when ya can. How did
you like it, by the way?

STELLA

Well, not enough blood, definitely no orgy, and I'm still not really sure what qualifies as a she-devil, so all in all a decent watch.

Brian laughs.

BRIAN

I'd probably sue the sons of bitches that made that film for false advertising today.

STELLA

It was the era, though. You had to be the most shocking movie at the drive-in to bring in the big bucks. Promising a blood orgy probably brought in all the nutjobs in town.

BRIAN

Including me.

STELLA

Shit, really? I keep forgetting you're, like, old.

Brian moves into the main room with Stella.

Dave moves back behind the counter. He takes out a rag and dust spray and begins to wipe down the counter.

BRIAN

Yes ma'am. I'd never pay to get in, though. There was a hilltop about an eighth of a mile away from the screen, just outside the drive-in property. I'd grab a lawn chair from my dad's garage and a pair of binoculars. I'd also have to bring my radio to get the audio. The drive-in was smart enough to buy a radio station so that horny teens could still hear the movie while hooking up, but not smart enough to limit the frequency beyond their property. You could hear the movies they were playing driving down Main any day of the week. It closed in the '80's, which is a shame.

(MORE)

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I bought some of the reels they had in the back at their liquidation auction. Keep them in a box at my house. Not sure which box it is anymore, but they're somewhere.

DAVE

I actually think they're at my place. My parents got me an old-school projector for Christmas a couple years ago, and we all watched those movies on a bed sheet. That was a good night.

BRIAN

Shit, yeah, that was a good night. We should do that again sometime. We haven't had a decent movie night in a while.

DAVE

I think that'd be nice.

Dave and Brian smile at each other endearingly.

Suddenly, the rusted-out doorbell rings.

ZEKE, a teenager with long hair and a denim jacket walks in. Obviously high, he starts wandering around the store, staring at the shelves.

STELLA

I hate to interrupt male bonding, but this is the guy at school I was telling y'all about. Zeke!

Zeke, caught off-guard, turns towards Brian and Stella.

STELLA (CONT'D)

That's Zeke. He's cool. I've been seeing him the past few weeks. He wants to get into the sort of things I'm into, so I obviously had to point him this way.

ZEKE

How's it goin'?

Brian quickly walks over to Zeke and throws his arm over his shoulder. He begins to guide Zeke through the shelves of the store.

BRIAN

Sir Zeke, first of his name, welcome to my store. Is there anything in particular you're looking for today? Got a favorite genre? Favorite director? Favorite kink? We can handle any needs that you may have.

Zeke stutters out an answer, obviously caught off guard by Brian's kindness.

ZEKE

I... uhh... I'm into horror.

Brian darts off to one of the shelves in the front room, obviously with something in mind.

BRIAN

Aaahhh, a like-minded man, I see. Today, I'm going to point you towards Basket Case. You ever hear of this?

ZEKE

I assume it's not like Green Day.

BRIAN

Oh yeah, not at all. It's better. Way way way better.

ZEKE

What's it about?

BRIAN

Oh, it's your standard "killer keeps his deformed, formerly attached twin in a basket and then unleashes him at opportune moments to attack and eat his victims. Sounds like something you'd be interested in?

STELLA

It's great, babe, it's one of the first things Brian ever showed me. Super awesome gore effects. Completely insane premise. Campy as all hell.

Zeke chuckles quietly.

ZEKE

Well, if she likes it, I guess
I'll have to check it out too.

Brian runs back to the counter with the DVD in hands. He tosses it down for Dave to ring up. Dave scans the barcode on the back of the box with a hand scanner.

DAVE

Alright man, that'll be 4 bucks.

The cash register opens up. Brian promptly shuts it with a SLAM.

BRIAN

Nonsense, your first rental's on the house. Any friend of Stella's a friend of ours.

Dave looks at Brian with a nervous smile.

DAVE

You sure about this, Captain?
We're a bit cash poor at the moment.

BRIAN

Absolutely. This, my good friend, is how you create community. Go home, Zeke. Enjoy the movie. Let us know what ya thought. I try to keep tabs on what all of my customers like so I can always point them towards cool new stuff. This store's a living, breathing subculture for freaks like you and me.

Zeke looks down at his DVD case with a dumb, stoned smile. He walks towards the door.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Good kid.

Zeke turns back to Brian.

ZEKE

When's this due back, man?

BRIAN

Whenever the hell you want to bring it back is fine by us, isn't it Dave?

Dave responds through gritted teeth.

DAVE
Sure is, boss.

BRIAN
That's right. Have a good day,
Zeke.

STELLA
I'll see ya later, babe.

Zeke, clearly unsure as to who to say goodbye to first, gives a dopey wave to the general store. He walks out, and the doorbell gives another rusted chime.

Stella looks at Brian with glee.

Dave looks at Brian with disappointment.

STELLA (CONT'D)
Thank you so much, Brian, I really
appreciated that.

Brian smiles and walks to the back room, where the movie is still playing.

BRIAN
Not a problem at all, Stella.
Customer service is what's kept me
afloat all these years.

DAVE
Maybe for the first 15 years or
so. When this ship eventually does
sink-

BRIAN
If this ship eventually does sink.

DAVE
When. When this ship eventually
sinks, you're going to regret all
those free rentals.

BRIAN
No I won't- I mean, wouldn't. No I
wouldn't.

DAVE
Why not?

BRIAN

Because I'd much rather share what I love with people who want it than sit here like a square all day, calling houses because they haven't returned their movies on time. I started this store to give people the same feeling I had sitting on that hill above the drive-in, the sense of discovery and observation.

Dave moves into the back room.

DAVE

And what happened to that drive-in you stole from? Are they still thriving and in business?

BRIAN

I'll have you know that that the drive-in closed because someone turned all the bathrooms into a meth lab, not because of money problems.

DAVE

And how do you think they got away with that? It's because they thought they could get away with putting a lab there because no one went.

BRIAN

Shut up.

There's an awkward silence.

STELLA

If I were starting a meth lab, I'd do it in, like, a Walmart bathroom. Go big or go home, right?

Dave and Brian look at each other, then decide to laugh.

BRIAN

Yeah. I bet you wouldn't have to look too far outside that bathroom to find someone who would buy.

DAVE

Those get busted all the time though. There was just one in Muncie a year or two back.

STELLA

Yeah, but I'd be a smart meth lab runner. I'd have the little pine-scented tags everywhere. It'd probably smell cleaner than a Walmart bathroom usually would.

DAVE

I think you've got a point there. You've found your new calling, I guess.

Suddenly, an alarm beeps from Stella's pocket.

She pulls out her cellphone.

STELLA

Volunteer hours for the day are up.

She pulls out a sheet of paper from her back pocket of her pants.

STELLA (CONT'D)

Sign me off, geezer.

She hands the paper to Brian, who walks over to and sets it down on the counter.

Dave and Stella follow him.

Brian pulls a pen from his shirt pocket.

He tries to start writing, but the pen doesn't have any ink in it.

BRIAN

Dave, you got a pen? I've got a dud.

DAVE

Yeah, hold on a second.

Dave reaches into his pants pocket and pulls out a pen.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Here ya go.

Dave hands the pen to Brian.

BRIAN

Thank ya much. Alright, here we go. Task achieved? "Assisting the elderly in... uhhh..."

Brian taps the pen on his chin.

DAVE
Archiving?

BRIAN
Perfect.

Brian continues writing.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
"Assisting the elderly in
archiving." How many hours?
Stella, how many hours did you
spend here? We're on the honors
system here.

STELLA
Ya know, I wasn't really watching
the clock, so I'm gonna go ahead
and say 30 hours on
non-consecutive days.

BRIAN
Excellent choice.

Dave scoffs.

DAVE
You're just gonna let her get away
with that? She was here all of 5
hours, and most of that was spent
watching House with you in the
back.

Brian laughs and gives Dave a hearty pat on the back.

BRIAN
I said honors system, so if that's
a lie, I guess it'll be on her
immortal soul. Are you worried
about your immortal soul, Stella?

Stella starts to make her way to the door.

STELLA
If Joey Ramone went to heaven,
then so will I.

DAVE
And what if he didn't?

Stella stops in the door frame.

STELLA

Then I don't want to be there
either.

Stella peaks her head at a shelf right next to the doorway.
She picks up a DVD from the top of the shelf.

STELLA (CONT'D)

"Cute Little Buggers." Is this
about killer rabbits?

Dave sighs in resignation.

DAVE

It's actually about killer alien
rabbits that want to impregnate
women with terrifying insect
creatures so that they can take
over the world.

BRIAN

It fucking rules. You wanna take
it home with ya?

STELLA

Yeah. I'll have it back
eventually?

Dave turns to face Brian.

DAVE

But what about her other rentals?

BRIAN

What other rentals?

DAVE

All of the-

Brian shushes Dave.

BRIAN

It's all yours Stella. Bring it
back eventually.

STELLA

Thanks, guys. Take it easy.

Stella leaves.

The rusted doorbell rings.

Brian moves away from the counter and towards the shelf
where Stella grabbed the movie.

He begins to rearrange the shelf so that it doesn't appear to be missing anything.

BRIAN

I'm tellin' ya, she'll run this place when I'm in the ground.

DAVE

If there's still a place for her to run when she comes of age, then maybe. You and her definitely share... something. Can't say I entirely know what it is at this point in my life, but there's something.

BRIAN

Exactly.

INT. DAVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dave and his parents are sitting in the living room, watching some basketball game.

Eugene and Claudia are wearing sports gear for one of the teams playing.

They are, of course, in their signature recliners.

Dave is clearly uninterested, watching the TV with glossed-over eyes.

EUGENE

I think this squad can pull it off, what do you think Dave?

Dave rolls his eyes.

DAVE

Sure. This squad's the one. Not like all the other squads that were the one these past few years.

EUGENE

You watch your tongue, young man.

CLAUDIA

Maybe he'd be more excited for the team if he actually finished school there. What do you think Eugene?

EUGENE

I think that is a distinct possibility, yes.

DAVE

Or maybe, just maybe, I've never liked sports and finishing college wouldn't have changed me one little bit, and I'd still be sitting here with you guys bored out of my mind on the couch whether or not I finished school?

CLAUDIA

Or the other one. We think the other one.

EUGENE

That's right!

The doorbell rings.

DAVE

Finally, my company has arrived.

Dave goes to the door.

There stands Brian. He's holding a six pack of beer in one hand, and a plastic bag of movies in the other.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Hey man, good to see ya.

BRIAN

Likewise, even though your shift ended three hours ago. You wanna get to this?

DAVE

Hell yeah.

The two make their way towards the basement door.

Brian stops just before they head downstairs, just by the basement door.

BRIAN

Hey Mr. and Mrs. Dave, hope you two are well.

The basement door shuts.

CLAUDIA

I never really got over his age,
ya know? I think that he's a few
years younger than us. Shoot, he
might even be older than us.

EUGENE

It used to bother me. Then I sorta
figured I was happy he was
spending time with anyone instead
of holing up in the basement all
day with his movies.

INT. DAVE'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Brian slams down the bag of DVDs.

The two stand over the bag in anticipation.

DAVE

Alright, how do you wanna choose
tonight?

BRIAN

I say we stick to the classic.

Dave leans back and opens a drawer.

He pulls out a blindfold.

He holds it out to Brian.

DAVE

Right.

CUT TO:

Brian wearing the blindfold.

The movies are spread out on Dave's bed. They cover several
different formats from DVD to VHS to Laserdisc.

Brian chooses a random movie and holds it up.

Brian and Dave jump for joy.

The movie's some awful rarity no one's ever heard of.

They go to the DVD player.

Brian puts the disc in.

He sits down on the couch in front of the TV with Dave.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

The movie. It's in color, but the sort of washed out color of a good 80's B film.

Something wacky in the movie happens on screen.

Dave and Brian burst out laughing.

They're on the edge of their seats.

Another crazy, dumb thing happens in the movie.

The two get up and clap.

The credits roll.

END OF MONTAGE.

The two sit as the main menu of the DVD plays.

BRIAN

Oh man, that was great.

DAVE

Absolutely. Where the hell did you find this? We definitely have to put it out to rent.

BRIAN

I found it at a flea market. I think the guy said that he was in this and wanted to erase any memory of the project. He gave it to me for free under the condition that I burn it.

DAVE

Well. you're obviously not burning it, right?

BRIAN

You're god damned right.

INT. BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO - DAY

Dave stands at the counter.

Some Japanese samurai movie plays on the TV in the back room.

Dave checks his watch.

1:56.

DAVE

Where the hell is he?

The credits on the samurai film begin to roll.

Dave checks his watch.

3:23.

Dave shakes his head.

DAVE (CONT'D)

God damn it, old man.

He goes to the back room to change the DVD.

He opens up the TV's DVD player and picks a random DVD from a nearby shelf.

He puts it in and presses play.

The doorbell RINGS.

Dave calls out, still not turned around to actually face the door.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Where the hell have you been?
You're late even for a guy who
opens his business at noon. You'd
better have a-

FRANCES (O.S.)

Hello?

Dave turns around.

FRANCES, a woman in her mid-20's with a twee look about her, enters the store.

DAVE

Could I help you?

FRANCES

Yeah. I heard about this place
from my dad. He used to come here
all the time back in the 80s. I
was wondering if you could point
me towards a movie he told me
about a long time ago.

Dave moves from the back area to the front, where Frances stands.

DAVE

Oh yeah, absolutely. Do you remember what it was called?

FRANCES

I don't. He passed away pretty recently, so I can't really call him up to ask, either.

DAVE

I'm sorry.

FRANCES

Don't be.

DAVE

I'm sure that he lived a-

FRANCES

I'm sorry, but this really isn't something I want to talk about. I don't mean to be rude, I really don't, but I came here for this one thing and I really want to get it. It'll help me out a lot.

Dave is silent for a few beats, but then nods.

DAVE

Alright. What are ya looking for? What are the details that stick out the most?

FRANCES

Well, one of the biggest things I remember him talking about with this one was that the woman sawed into her own arm with an electric kitchen knife. He always said that she gave one of the best performances of all time. I also remember something about a giant tentacle monster that ate the people she delivered to it.

Frances gets emotional.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

My mom would always roll her eyes whenever he talked about it, but I ate it up as a girl.

(MORE)

FRANCES (CONT'D)

I never really dug into what he enjoyed until after he was gone. It's sorta my way of keeping him around.

Frances catches herself getting emotional. She clears her throat.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

Shit, sorry. Got off topic there for a second. But yeah, to recap: kitchen knife, crazy acting, tentacle monster. You got any idea what that is?

Dave darts over to a shelf.

DAVE

As a matter of fact, I do.

He pulls out a DVD.

DAVE (CONT'D)

This thing's called Possession. Your dad was a man of taste. Iaabelle Adjani, the lead actress, won the acting prize at Cannes. Have you ever seen Cronenberg's The Brood?

Frances shrugs.

FRANCES

All I've got Cronenberg-wise is The Fly.

She and Dave begin to aimlessly walk around the video store as they continue to chat.

DAVE

Well, what I will say is that those two films would make an excellent double feature for a divorced father who thinks that their ex-wife literally wants to murder them.

Frances lets out a sardonic laugh.

FRANCES

Ha. That sounds like him alright.

DAVE

No wonder he was so into it, then.
I think a movie like this sort of
has to exist in a way.

FRANCES

How do you mean?

DAVE

Well, I think this movie helped
the director get out some really
unproductive aggression he had
against women. I mean, geez, she's
just the craziest, worst person of
all time in this movie and was
probably meant to represent all
women.

FRANCES

So what you're basically saying is
that it's better he get it out on
film than take these feelings into
the real world?

DAVE

Precisely. It's sort of like how
Tarantino gets all of his foot
stuff out in his movies.

FRANCES

Oh, I don't think that's the same
at all.

DAVE

How do you mean?

FRANCES

Because you know that Tarantino is
an active foot fetishist behind
the scenes. He's not getting
anything out, he's just using his
movies as a trial run for the real
thing.

DAVE

Wow. Poor Uma.

FRANCES

Poor Uma for the foot stuff, or
poor Uma because Tarantino made
her get into a car crash?

DAVE

Both, to be honest.

They both laugh.

FRANCES

I'm Frances, by the way. Just like McDormand. I wouldn't mind any parallels you draw between us at all, she's a complete badass.

DAVE

And I'm Dave.

Dave takes a second to look at Frances.

She's beautiful.

You can see he thinks that in his face.

He looks towards the back room.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I... uhh...

FRANCES

Come on, spit it out.

She punches him in the arm gently.

DAVE

We play DVDs in the back during the day. I haven't watched That movie in quite some time. Would you... uhhh...

FRANCES

Yes.

Dave smiles.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

As long as you wouldn't have any customers to deal with.

DAVE

What? Here? No way.

FRANCES

A store specializing in a quickly dying subculture not having customers? Color me shocked.

DAVE

I know. The only people who have anything checked out right now are a high school girl and her boyfriend, and neither of them paid for their rentals.

FRANCES

Why's that?

DAVE

The owner's a complete marshmallow.

CUT TO:

Dave and Frances sit in the back room watching the film.

They're sitting fairly closely.

They each have a box of candy.

The movie credits roll.

It's dark outside.

DAVE (CONT'D)

So, what did you think of it?

Frances stands up.

FRANCES

I thought it was well-done, but if this was actually my dad's favorite movie, he sure hated women, huh?

Dave chuckles and stands up.

DAVE

Probably.

There's a few beats of silence.

Dave scratches the back of his neck and looks down towards the floor, almost in embarrassment.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Look, I don't know exactly what we have-

FRANCES

Effectively nothing apart from a pleasant afternoon.

DAVE

True, true. But it was very pleasant. Like, I haven't had a good time like that in a long time.

Frances smiles.

FRANCES

Me neither, to be honest. I thank you for a lovely afternoon.

DAVE

And I the same to you.

A few beats of silence.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I want to have another good afternoon with you.

FRANCES

That's maybe the worst way anyone's ever asked me out. Apart from the guy in middle school who asked if I fell from heaven but actually hoped I was from hell because he wanted a handy or whatever.

DAVE

Don't slam him too hard, he used subversion. That's way more than you can ask for from most middle school boys attracted to somebody.

FRANCES

I think we might be forgetting the topic at hand by talking so much about middle school boys.

DAVE

I think so too.

FRANCES

I can't believe I'm saying this, but I would like to have another nice afternoon with you too.

Dave smiles.

MONTAGE:

Frances and Dave watch another movie in the back of the store, laughing.

Frances and Dave enjoy a dinner with Eugene and Claudia at their house.. Frances handles conversation with Dave's parents deftly at the dinner table.

Frances and Dave are at Frances's mom's house, a gaudy rich person's house on a hill. Frances's mom, a stern looking woman, takes him aside. She stares him down for a few beats, then shakes his hand.

Frances and Dave pack boxes in Dave's basement.

Frances and Dave move all of the boxes into a UHAUL truck.

They unload his boxes into Frances's apartment, a quaint little place with cute, second hand furniture and bizarre little decorative oddities.

Frances and Dave lay in her bed under a comforter.

END OF MONTAGE

DAVE

I'm so happy I could do this.

FRANCES

Well, when you love someone, you tend to want to spend every living moment with them if you can.

Dave chuckles.

DAVE

I've certainly learned that.

They kiss.

DAVE (CONT'D)

I just hate that we have to go to work in the morning. I'm sure your pitch will go over fantastically.

FRANCES

Think so?

DAVE

Babe, no one can convince the general public to go to their local independent movie theater like you can.

FRANCES

That is just about the nicest thing anyone's ever said to me. And I'm sure the store will be in excellent care tomorrow.

DAVE

Thank ya much. It's honestly gotten a lot better, having to run the place by myself.

FRANCES

I'm glad.

DAVE

You would've really liked Brian. He was a super kooky guy. Always had something to say about somebody.

FRANCES

I'm sure I would've. He'll be back before long though, I'm sure of it.

Dave sighs.

DAVE

I hope.

INT. BRIAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Dave opens the door to Brian's apartment.

He is carrying a bag of dog food in one hand and a plastic grocery bag in the other.

He hears a BARK.

Nilbog comes racing towards the door.

DAVE

Hey boy, how's it going? Still dogging, I presume?

He walks into Brian's kitchen.

2 bowls labelled "FOOD" and "WATER" sit near the sink.

Dave pours the bag of dog food into the bowl.

He scoops wet food over the dry nibblets.

He pours water into Nilbog's bowl.

CUT TO:

Dave squatting by the door, petting Nilbog.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Be a good boy today, okay? If you're good, I'll go to the Popeye's and pick you up some chicken. Does that sound alright to you?

Nilbog whines.

Dave gives Nilbog one more solid pet.

He walks out the door.

Nilbog trots away.

He goes into the living room.

He jumps up on the couch.

He sniff at the spot Brian used to sit.

He lays down on it.

INT. BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO - NIGHT

It's raining outside.

Dave is checking out the order of a WOMAN in her mid-40's at the register.

DAVE

Alright, that'll be due back in 3 days. I hope you enjoy that. It's my favorite Lynch film behind Eraserhead.

WOMAN

What's that one about?

Dave pauses for a beat to think about it.

DAVE

Ya know, I couldn't really tell ya, to be honest. But Mulholland Drive is a great place to start with his style.

WOMAN

Thanks.

She walks towards the door and takes out her umbrella.

DAVE

Have a great night, and try to stay dry.

WOMAN

Same to you.

She exits the store. The rusted doorbell lets out a RING.

Dave opens up the cash register.

It's not quite as empty as before, but still a somewhat pitiful sight.

He places her cash in the register and shuts it.

He checks his watch.

Dave look around the store.

DAVE

(sarcastically)

Last call on rentals. All shoppers please make your way to the register. We close in 5, 4, 3, 2, and...

He looks at his clock for a few beats.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Closed. Thank you for supporting your local video store.

He takes the cash register off the counter and sets it down on the floor.

He unlocks a safe underneath the counter with a digital code.

He places the register inside the safe, then slams it shut.

He pulls a set of keys out of his pocket.

He makes his way to the front door, humming a tune to himself.

He opens the front door.

Standing there in the pouring rain is a sopping wet Brian, without umbrella.

Dave gasps and moves out of the way to let Brian in.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Shit. How... how are ya, man?
Where have ya been? It's been a
second. You sorta...

Brian stumbles past Dave, not saying a word.

The water from his clothes drips and stains the floor.

He moves to his office door and into...

BRIAN'S OFFICE.

Brian stumbles behind his desk and sits down.

Dave comes in right behind him.

Brian sits there for a few beats doing absolutely nothing
but breathing heavily.

He reaches under the desk.

He pulls out the bottle of whiskey.

He throws the cap off and starts to pick it up.

Dave dives over and snatches it out of his hands.

Brian looks up in shock. He's not even angry.

BRIAN

Dave, please give the whiskey back
to me.

DAVE

Not until you tell me what's going
on.

BRIAN

And what business is it of yours?

DAVE

Because you brought it into the
store. At this point, this place
is just as much mine as it is
yours. I've earned the courtesy of
knowing what you're going through
right now.

Brian sighs.

BRIAN

They voted me out.

Dave walks closer to the desk.

DAVE

What?

BRIAN

My siblings. They voted me out of the will. That means no more checks. That probably means no more store.

A few beats of silence.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

It's over, Dave. Unless we can pull money out of thin air, it's over.

A few beats of silence.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Don't you have anything to say, tough guy? You come into my own fucking office and corner me.

Brian is getting visibly angry.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

In fact, how DARE you. I employ you. I don't owe you any of this. You come in here with this sense of entitlement that all you young people have, and you demand to know my personal details. I oughta throw you out on your behind. No businessman should have to deal with insubordination at this level. No... no...

Brian trails off.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

It's not worth fighting, is it?

DAVE

Nope.

Brian rests his head in his arms on the desk.

BRIAN

I'm a failure. I've known it deep down somewhere this whole time, but now I know.

(MORE)

BRIAN (CONT'D)
I'm letting you down, I'm letting
my family down, I'm letting down
everyone that's ever come in here.

Dave makes his way to the desk.

He reaches behind the desk and opens a cabinet.

He picks out two glasses.

He pours each of them a glass of bourbon.

He pats Brian on the shoulder.

Brian perks up and sees the glasses.

He gives a knowing smile.

They each pick up their glasses.

They clink them together.

They both take a hearty, full drink.

INT. BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO - DAY

Brian and Dave are standing by the counter.

DAVE
Alright, we've gotta figure this
out, man.

BRIAN
I mean, I don't think we have much
of a chance, man.

DAVE
We've gotta try, though.

BRIAN
Is it really worth it, though?

DAVE
How do you mean?

BRIAN
Well, I don't know how much the
community would want to rally
around us. We're not, like, the
Humane Society or anything. I've
never saved anyone from child
trafficking. I'm just a guy who
wants to sell movies.

Dave thinks for a second.

He gestures his hands wide, as if he's envisioning a headline.

DAVE

"Local landmark in danger of closure, please donate while you can."

Brian throws his hands in the air, then slaps them on his knees.

BRIAN

I mean, I guess. But there has to be a better way to go about this.

A few beats of silence.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

How much would this really help us in the end, really?

DAVE

Now what are you on about?

BRIAN

So we find a way to get enough money to live another day. Okay, cool. But that won't last forever. People will lose interest, the money will start to dry up again, and then I'll be gone again. Why delay the inevitable?

Dave pats Brian on the shoulder.

DAVE

That's not the Brian I know. You're a tenacious, wily, son-of-a-bitch old man. You wouldn't let an obstacle like this stop you any other time. You'd keep moving forward and find a way to make things work. Didn't you get in trouble with the local church in the 80s for hosting screenings of Deep Throat? You went on ahead and did it anyway. Until the copyright goons came and made you cancel an unapproved screening, that is, but they literally had to send the government to stop you.

(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)

I think that we can pull something together. Even if the store does shut down from all this, I don't think you wouldn't want to go down without getting in a few swings.

Brian smiles with a renewed energy.

BRIAN

I suppose you're right.

The doorbell RINGS.

In comes Stella.

DAVE

Stella! You're just in time to give us a hand.

Stella walks towards the counter.

STELLA

I don't know, guys, I don't need to get volunteer hours anymore, and helping people right now just sounds... eh.

DAVE

No no, trust me, it's nothing too intensive. We're looking for ideas.

STELLA

Alright, so what we're gonna do is put little space-suits on penguins and pack them into little rockets...

DAVE

As incredible as that sounds, I was thinking about something a bit more specific. Do you wanna tell her Brian, or should I?

BRIAN

Go ahead, you're on a roll.

DAVE

So basically, the store is closing down if we don't do something, Brian's money is drying up.

Stella's face drops, as if her heart shattered into a million pieces.

STELLA

Shit, guys, I'm so sorry. I had no idea-

Dave cuts her off.

DAVE

One second. We're trying to think of something that would help get some money back into the store. Some sort of fundraiser or event that would get some money back in our hands. We know that expanding our inventory to include what people actually want to buy is out of the question because of ole Grumpy Gus over here.

BRIAN

I'll haunt this place if anyone ever starts selling POP figures from here.

DAVE

So we need something that's a bit more us. Something that shows the world who we are, and proudly boasts that we're not going anywhere.

Stella thinks for a few beats.

STELLA

What if you guys put on a festival?

Dave and Brian both look at her, intrigued.

DAVE

Go on.

STELLA

Yeah, put together a program of, like, 12 hours worth of movies, with some stuff people know and some stuff you nerds only care about. Charge admission, keep the ticket money, show the world some cool movies. Sounds pretty fool-proof to me.

BRIAN

This isn't the worst idea I've ever heard.

DAVE

Absolutely not. We'd just need to get a decent program together and find somewhere to screen it. I can see if I can call in a favor with my girlfriend. She does marketing with the Crown Theater.

BRIAN

Wait, shit, you have a girlfriend? Nice.

DAVE

Yeah, thanks man.

STELLA

Is she prettier than Brian?

DAVE

Abso-fucking-lutely.

Brian gives a look of fake-offense.

BRIAN

My heavens, you are quite rude, young man.

DAVE

So, back to the topic at hand, I'll talk to her later and see what we can figure out.

BRIAN

Thanks man, I really do appreciate it, even if I am a bit pessimistic about the whole thing.

A couple beats.

DAVE

Brian, what's your favorite place in the whole world?

BRIAN

Right here.

DAVE

Stella, what's your favorite place in the whole world?

STELLA

The junkyard. People throw away the coolest shit.

Dave scoffs sarcastically.

DAVE
Second favorite.

STELLA
Right here.

DAVE
And it's mine too. And I don't
want to watch it die. I can't
imagine either of you do, either.
So let's figure this out. Sound
good?

Stella nods.

Brian nods.

BRIAN
Sounds good, kid.

A loud horn HONKS from off screen.

We see Zeke in a car on the road just outside the shop. He
waves inside to Stella.

STELLA
That's my ride. But let's keep
talking about this. I think we've
got something great. Peace.

She leaves the store.

INT. FRANCES'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frances is at the stove in her kitchen, cooking some
complicated looking dinner.

Dave bursts into the house in an excited huff.

FRANCES
Hey babe, how was-

Dave rushes over to her.

DAVE
Frances, hi, so glad to see you.

He gives her a sloppy kiss on the cheek.

Frances laughs.

FRANCES
What's got you so excitable today?

DAVE

Okay, didn't your firm catch the manager of the movie theater doing something really fucked up with the finances of that place?

FRANCES

Yeah, why do you ask?

DAVE

Has it gone public?

FRANCES

No.

DAVE

Great. I need to exploit that connection to put on a film festival for the shop.

Frances turns away from her food, obviously confused.

FRANCES

Wha-

DAVE

So basically, Brian's out of money and he needs to drum up a lot really quickly, otherwise the entire business is going down. The only idea close to feasible is to put on a film festival slash marathon slash whatever to get some cash. If we can get a screen at the Crown that'd be huge. Do you think you could help us?

Frances stutters.

FRANCES

I...I... uh... sure, I think. I'll see what we can do.

Dave woops.

DAVE

Thank you so much! You have a photocopier and a printer at your office, right?

FRANCES

Uh, yeah.

DAVE

Can I stop in there tomorrow for,
like, two seconds to photocopy our
flyer that we're putting out?

FRANCES

Sure, I suppose.

Frances sighs.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

Sorry if I sound dismissive, but
you're just throwing a million
things at once at me, and I'm just
trying to process it all. I'm
completely supportive of this, and
I'll come out for the festival.

Dave gives her a hug from behind.

DAVE

That's what I love so much about
you. Always so supportive.

A BUZZ. Dave pulls his phone out of his pocket and checks
the screen.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Shit, Brian just emailed me the
design. I'll have to make a couple
edits, but it looks pretty good.

Dave starts running towards the bedroom door.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Dinner smells great by the way, I
can't wait to eat it after the two
minutes it'll take me to knock out
these re-designs!

The bedroom door SLAMS.

Frances laughs, shakes her head, and turns back to the
stove.

MONTAGE

Dave stands in front of a photocopier at FRANCE'S OFFICE as
sheet after sheet prints out.

Dave, Stella, and Brian stand in a circle in the middle of
the store. Dave passes them each a stack of flyers.

Dave places a flyer in a coffee shop.

Stella places a flyer in a library.

Brian covers a streetlight with several posters.

Dave plasters a poster on a wall, allowing us to read it:
"THE SAVE BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO MOVIE MARATHON: 12 HOURS OF
THE GREATEST SCHLOCK FILMS TO SAVE OUR STORE. JUNE 10th
FROM NOON TO MIDNIGHT."

INT. DAVE'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Claudia and Eugene are sitting on their traditional chairs watching something along the lines of "Everybody Loves Raymond."

Dave unlocks the front door and walks into the house, holding a small stack of the flyers.

Neither Eugene nor Claudia turn around.

EUGENE

Who's there? We've got a gun,
buster.

DAVE

Mom, Dad, it's me.

Claudia and Eugene turn to see him.

CLAUDIA

Oh sweetie, hi. How have you been?

DAVE

I've been doing okay. How are you
guys?

EUGENE

We're both alright. Nothing too
outside of the usual. Apart from
Harry not coming to my union's
McDonald's breakfast anymore
because we made fun of his
horse-faced wife.

CLAUDIA

Eugene, come on...

EUGENE

What? I shoot from the hip? I'm
old! I'm allowed to say whatever I
want. I've earned it. And so have
you.

CLAUDIA

So what brings you back to the house, Dave? How's, ummm...

DAVE

Frances.

CLAUDIA

Yeah, Frances! How is she? You two still going steady? I'd love to meet her one day.

DAVE

Yep. Things are alright. I actually came here to, uh...

Dave grabs two flyers from his stack. He hands them to his parents.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Ask if you guys wanted to come to this. Brian's is at risk of closing, and we're putting together a marathon. It'd mean a lot to me if you guys came.

Eugene sighs.

EUGENE

Dave, I... I don't know.

Dave's face drops.

Claudia looks over to Eugene.

CLAUDIA

Honey, maybe we can talk about this later and let him...

EUGENE

No. He has to hear me tell him no this time. I'm sorry Dave. I can really tell this means something to you, I really can. But you know how I feel about that store and what it's done to your future.

DAVE

I still have a future, Dad.

EUGENE

I'm so sorry that I can't say that for sure.

A few beats of silence.

EUGENE (CONT'D)

I wish the best for the marathon,
I really do. But maybe it wouldn't
be the worst thing in the world
for the place to close down. It'll
give you a kick in the ass, but
maybe you need that. I certainly
did before I started at the mill.

CLAUDIA

Honey, please-

EUGENE

Claudia, I've made my decision.
We're not going, Dave. We just
can't. We hope you understand.

Dave sighs.

DAVE

Yep.

He jets straight for the door. He slams it behind him.

Eugene sighs and shuts his eyes.

EXT. CROWN MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Brian's truck pulls up in front of the theater. The theater
has a huge, garish sign with flashing lights and a giant
marquee.

Brian and Dave step out of the truck. We see their black
shoes hit the ground.

They're wearing identical full tuxedos. Brian is dragging a
cooler behind him.

They walk up to the box office.

A TEENAGE CLERK is running it.

TEENAGE CLERK

What can I help you with, sirs?

Brian takes two tickets out of his pockets.

BRIAN

Yeah, we've got tickets to the
marathon.

He slams the tickets down on the counter.

The clerk looks down at the cooler.

TEENAGE CLERK

What's in the cooler?

BRIAN

Film reels.

The clerk squints in suspicion.

Brian rolls his eyes and pulls a 20 dollar bill out of his pocket.

He gives it to the clerk.

The clerk's eyes widen.

He tears their ticket.

TEENAGE CLERK

Enjoy your marathon.

INT. CROWN MOVIE THEATER - DAY

The movie theater is well-lit and empty. It's one of those old-time movie theaters where every seat is a good seat.

Brian sits in the middle of the very back row. Dave sits in the row directly in front of him and slightly to the right.

They look around at the theater.

Brian checks his watch.

11:56.

BRIAN

Shit. Were there not enough flyers?

DAVE

I dunno, man. Frances had to run to her mom's this morning, so she'll be here later.

The lights in the theater dim. Brian and Dave both have a look of resignation.

Dave sighs. Suddenly, a beer can appears next to his face. He looks behind him.

Brian is extending a beer to him. Dave smiles and takes a beer.

Brian reaches into the cooler and grabs his own can.

They both open their beers and clink the cans together.

Suddenly, we hear the door to the theater open, and a light comes in.

Coming into view is Claudia, who stands at the front of the auditorium.

INT. DAVE'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

Eugene sits in silence watching a John Wayne movie.

INT. CROWN MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Dave waves up to his mom. She goes up the stair and sits in the row ahead of Dave.

Brian WHISTLES.

Claudia looks up towards him. He tosses her a beer.

She catches it with ease.

The first movie plays. It's some bizarro sci-fi movie from the 50's, something along the lines of "Plan 9 From Outer Space."

CUT TO:

The end of the first movie. The three in the crowd applaud the film as it comes to an end.

The door opens up again. It's Frances. She enters the auditorium.

She instantly sees Dave and walks up to his row.

She looks behind her to see Brian, who gives her a salute. They shake hands.

She looks in front of her to see Claudia turned around to see her. Claudia reaches out, and the two hold hands for a few beats.

Another movie starts right up. It's a horror movie from the 80's.

CUT TO:

The end of another movie. As the credits roll, the crowd applauds, obviously somewhat drunk.

Brian stands up in front of everybody, as if he were an MC.

BRIAN

Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen, that was movie number 4 of 7- Attack of the Killer Tomatoes. We've still got some hits ahead, so don't you go anywhere.

The crowd cheers.

Suddenly, the door opens again.

It's Stella and Zeke. They hold hands as they come to the front of the auditorium.

STELLA

Hey guys. Sorry we're late, we had Saturday school for ditching the PSAT to make out.

BRIAN

That's metal as hell.

DAVE

Thank you so much for coming, Stella. It means a lot. And Zeke, good to see ya again, buddy. You takin' good care of her?

ZEKE

Absolutely sir.

DAVE

That's what we wanted to hear. Come on up.

They climb the stairs and sit in front of Claudia.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Stella, this is my mom, and next to me is my wonderful girlfriend Frances, and-

A beer flies down. Stella catches it. Another beer flies down, which Zeke catches.

BRIAN

You guys are 18, right? That's the age where I'm comfortable supplying underage drinking. Again, honors system.

STELLA

Yep! Isn't that right, honey?

ZEKE

Uh, yeah! Far out.

BRIAN

Good enough for me.

STELLA

What's up now?

BRIAN

The He-Man movie Masters of the Universe.

STELLA

Isn't that the one where they don't spend any actual time in He-Man world, but instead just kinda roam around California?

BRIAN

Precisely.

STELLA

I'm in.

The movie plays over a montage of our characters laughing along.

EXT. CROWN THEATER - NIGHT

Everyone that was in the theater waves goodbye to Claudia as she drives away from her parking spot in front of the theater.

Frances, Dave, and Brian turn to Zeke and Stella.

BRIAN

You guys need a lift anywhere?

STELLA

Nah. Zeke's place is a 10 minute walk from here. We'll be fine.

ZEKE

We've both got switchblades too. Not that crime is a problem in this town or anything, but still.

BRIAN

Well, that's good to hear. You both take care now.

Zeke throws his arm around Stella and they walk away.

Brian turns to Frances and Dave.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
And you're riding home with
Frances, correct?

DAVE
Yessir. Hey Brian?

BRIAN
Yeah, man?

DAVE
That wasn't enough to save the
store, was it?

Brian smiles a warm smile.

BRIAN
Go home and get some rest,
partner.

Dave nods in acknowledgement.

DAVE
You too.

EXT. BRIAN'S CULT VIDEO - NIGHT

Brian's truck pulls up in front of the video store.

He gets out.

He sighs.

He walks into the store after unlocking it.

INT. BRIAN'S VIDEO STORE - DAY

Dave unlocks the door and walks into the store.

He looks around.

Empty, apart from several boxes on the floor.

The shelves have been stripped.

The TV in the back is gone.

He goes behind the counter and squats down.

The safe has been torn out.

He stands back up and notices a note on the counter.

He begins to read it.

BRIAN (V.O.)

Dave - you're right. That wasn't enough to save the store last night. But I'll be damned if that wasn't the best night of my entire life. As you can see -

Dave looks around at all of the boxes strewn across the floor.

BRIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I've left behind everything. I don't need any more movies. You and I both know that. The store's collection is yours. You were the only one who could ever deserve it. You've been my best friend the past several years.

INT/EXT. DAVE'S CAR - DAY

Dave drives with tears in his eyes as the letter continues. His trunk is full of the boxes.

BRIAN (V.O.)

The world gave up on me, and the world gave up on our movies. But you never did. You never could. You're one of the good ones. I'll never be able to thank you enough for all the joy you've brought me since you were a scrawny teenager looking for a summer job. I never bothered to have a son, because who the hell would, but I still feel like my love for you is the closest that I'll ever come to feeling like I have one.

INT. FRANCES'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dave sits alone on the couch surrounded by the boxes.

Frances comes in. She sees Dave sitting alone with the boxes, and immediately comes to embrace him.

BRIAN (V.O.)

I don't know what you'll do with all of these DVDs. You could start your own shop. Or just keep them in a storage closet. That's all up to you.

INT. DAVE'S VIDEO STORE - DAY

Dave's Video Store is a cleaner, more organized version of Brian's. It has higher quality shelves installed in the walls (think a Blockbuster).

Zeke is putting DVDs on the shelf, while Stella counts money at the register.

There's a small shelf next to the register with a row of trendy Funko POP figures. A few are missing from the lineup.

BRIAN (V.O.)

The point is that, well, I don't have much of a legacy to show for anymore. I ran a business for 30 years and then failed. But you've got everything ahead of you. You can do everything differently. You could pander to dumb mainstream nerds like I should've, you could put in more mainstream stuff, you can actually encourage people to come in and shop instead of turning away anyone dressed a certain way like I did.

From the area by the front door, Dave looks proudly upon the store.

BRIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Where will I end up? Who knows.

INT./EXT. BRIAN'S TRUCK - DAY

Brian drives along a country road.

BRIAN (V.O.)

I'll probably drive until my engine dies and see where Nilbog and I end up from there.

There's a huge amount of boxes in his trunk bed.

BRIAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I'm not too scared, though. I've
 got my dog and my truck for now,
 and I don't think I need all too
 much more. All I can think to tell
 you now is to keep loving movies.
 Movies expose the viewers to
 themselves.

Nilbog pops up in the passenger's seat and barks.

FADE TO BLACK: